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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/686,928	10/16/2003	Leslie J. Mack	3999861-146302	7512

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EXAMINER

OUELLETTE, JONATHAN P

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3629

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

10/14/2009

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/686,928

Applicant(s)

MACK, LESLIE J.

Examiner

Jonathan Ouellette

Art Unit

3629

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 July 2009.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4, 8, 10-13, 17 and 21-30 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4, 8, 10-13, 17 and 21-30 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) 25, 27, and 29-30 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Request for Continued Examination

1. The Request filed on 7/24/2009 for Continued Examination (RCE) under 37 CFR 1.114 based on parent Application No. **10/686,928** is acceptable and a RCE has been established. An action on the RCE follows.

Response to Amendment

2. Claims 5-7, 9, 14-16, and 18-20 have been cancelled and Claims 24-30 have been added; therefore, Claims 1-4, 8, 10-13, 17, and 21-30 are currently pending in application 10/686,928.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

3. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

4. **Claims 1-4, 8 and 21-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the independent claims fails to meet the machine-or-transformation test, and therefore, fails to satisfy § 101 requirements.**
5. The machine-or-transformation test is a two-branched inquiry; an applicant may show that a process claim satisfies § 101 either by showing that his claim is tied to a particular machine, or by showing that his claim transforms an article. See Benson, 409 U.S. at 70. Certain considerations are applicable to analysis under either branch. First, as illustrated by Benson

and discussed below, the use of a specific machine or transformation of an article must impose meaningful limits on the claim's scope to impart patent-eligibility. See Benson, 409 U.S. at 71-72. Second, the involvement of the machine or transformation in the claimed process must not merely be insignificant extra-solution activity (i.e. *saving data in a database and displaying data from a database*). See Flook, 437 U.S. at 590.

6. Therefore, because the applicable test to determine whether a claim is drawn to a patent-eligible process under § 101 is the machine-or-transformation test set forth by the Supreme Court and clarified herein, and independent Claims 1-9 and 21-23 plainly fail that test, the claims are rejected.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

7. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

8. **Claims 28-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.**
9. Claims 28-30 disclose a method dependent on an independent system claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

10. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject

matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

11. **Claims 1-4, 8, 10-13, 17, 21-24, and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mack (Application 10/686,928 - Admitted prior art disclosed by the Applicant in the Background section of the Specification).**
12. As per Claims 1-4, 8, 10-13, 17, 21-24, and 26, the Applicant admits (Background of the Invention) that the claimed invention was a common practice in the hotel industry at the time the invention was made (call-around). The Applicant is merely applying automated tools to the common practice.
13. Furthermore, it was known at the time of the invention that merely providing an automatic means to replace a manual activity which accomplishes the same result is not sufficient to distinguish over the prior art, *In re Venner*, 262 F.2d 91, 95, 120 USPQ 193, 194 (CCPA 1958). For example, simply automating the step of scoring the insurance policy based upon the information from the customer and policy gives you just what you would expect from the manual step as shown in by the Applicant. In other words there is no enhancement found in the claimed step. The claimed collecting and distribution steps only provide automation to the manual activity. The end result is the same as compared to the manual method. A computer can simply iterate the steps faster. The result is the same.
14. Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to automate the collection and presentation steps because this would speed up the process of providing information to the users, which is purely known, and an expected result from automation of what is known in the art.

Allowable Subject Matter

15. **Claims 25, 27, and 29-30** contain allowable subject matter.
16. Claims 25, 27, and 29-30 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.
17. The Examiner suggests incorporating the all the disclosed elements from dependent claims 25, 27, and 29-30 (combined) into the independent claims to overcome the cited prior art.

Response to Arguments

18. Applicant's arguments filed on 7/24/2009, with respect to Claims 1-4, 8, 10-13, 17, and 21-30, have been considered but are not persuasive or are moot based on the new grounds of rejection. The rejection will remain as NON-FINAL.
19. The Applicant is directed to the rejection above in response to arguments.

Conclusion

20. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jonathan Ouellette whose telephone number is (571) 272-6807. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday, 8am - 5:00pm.
21. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Weiss can be reached on (571) 272-6812. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned (571) 273-8300 for all official communications.

22. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Office of Initial Patent Examination whose telephone number is (571) 272-4000. Information regarding the status of an application may also be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

May 26, 2008

/Jonathan Ouellette/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3629